## Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A manifold assembly comprising:

a collar;

a base;

a first sample processing device;

a collection plate ~~second device~~, which contacts the first sample processing device and is stacked below said first sample processing device to form an integral stacked unit ~~preventing relative movement between said first devices~~, said stacked unit positioned between said collar and said base;

a first seal between said collar and said base; and

a second seal between said first sample processing device and said collar, wherein the collar comprises a skirt formed along a bottom periphery of a lateral wall such that the skirt positions over a peripheral portion of the base.

2. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 1, wherein said first sample preparation device is a multiwell filtration plate.

3. (Currently amended) The manifold assembly of claim 2, wherein said collection plate ~~second device~~ is a multiwell collection plate.

4. (Currently amended) The manifold assembly of claim 2, wherein said ~~second device~~ collection plate is a MALDI target.

5. (Currently amended) The manifold of claim 1, wherein said collection plate ~~second device~~ is a removable support, and said first sample processing device

comprises a plurality of wells, and the removable support comprises a plurality of openings and each opening is in register with a plurality of sample processing device wells.

6. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 1, wherein said first seal is a gasket.

7. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 1, wherein said second seal is a gasket.

8. (Currently amended) The manifold assembly of claim 1, wherein said first seal allows for variability in the height of said first device and the collection plate ~~second devices~~.

9. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 1, wherein said collar has substantially vertical side walls, and wherein said first seal is created with a gasket positioned within said base, said sealing being along the substantially vertical side walls of said collar.

10. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 1, wherein said first and second seal are a unitary seal.

11. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 1, further comprising a vacuum source, and wherein said base comprises a port for communication with said vacuum source.

12. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 1, wherein the relative movement of said first and second devices of said integral stack unit is unaffected by the application of vacuum to said manifold.

13. (Currently amended) A manifold assembly comprising:

a collar;

a base in sealing engagement with said collar, the base comprising an outer peripheral flange and a side wall which together form a peripheral groove and wherein a portion of the flange contacts a slot formed in the collar;

a sample processing device positioned in sealing engagement with said collar and wherein the collar comprises a skirt formed along a bottom periphery of a lateral wall such that the skirt positions over a peripheral portion of the base~~; and~~

~~a gasket positioned in the collar which does not contact the sample processing device~~.

14. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 13, further comprising a removable support positioned below said sample processing device.

15. (Original) The manifold assembly of claim 13, wherein said sample processing device is a multiwell filtration plate.

16. (Previously presented) A method of applying vacuum to a manifold assembly, comprising:

providing a vacuum source;

providing a manifold comprising a base having a port for communication with said vacuum source, a collar, a first sample processing device and a second device stacked to form a sample processing unit;

positioning said sample processing unit between said base and said collar;

positioning said collar on said base; and

applying a vacuum to said manifold with said vacuum source, whereby said collar is forced into sealing engagement with said base without causing movement of said sample processing unit.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein said first processing device is a filtration plate.

18. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein said sealing engagement between said collar and said base is adaptable to different sample processing unit stack heights.

19. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein functional inserts are positionable in said base.

20. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein said second device is a sample processing device.

21. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein said second device is a removable support.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said second device is a MALDI target.

23. (New) A manifold assembly comprising:

a collar;

a base;

a first sample processing device;

a second device stacked below said first sample processing device to form an integral stacked unit preventing relative movement between said first and second devices, said stacked unit positioned between said collar and said base;

a unitary seal between said collar and said base and between said first sample processing device and said collar.